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ABSTRACT

One type of adaptation made by each student teacher is the development of attitudes toward controlling pupils. The student teachers' attitudes toward pupil control may be at odds with those of other educators and this difference in attitude, particularly in the case of the cooperating teacher, can cause stress. Attitudes toward pupil control can be measured by an instrument called the Pupil Control Ideology Form (PCI). Studies have found that student teachers began their field experiences with a significantly less custodial orientation than their cooperating teachers. Post-testing revealed a significant shift in the student teachers' orientation from a humanistic attitude to the more custodial attitude held by cooperating teachers. An additional shift in attitude in the same direction was observed during the first year of inservice teaching. Some findings have indicated that these shifts in attitude appear to be stronger in student teachers preparing to teach in secondary schools, and it has been posited that there are more attempts to socialize teachers into a bureaucratic mold at the secondary school level than at the elementary level. Stress can occur for student teachers if they resist bureaucratization and if their attitudes do not change to agree with those of their cooperating teachers. University supervisors can reduce the likelihood of this kind of stress by using the PCI to determine the attitudes of both the student teacher and the cooperating teacher before the student teaching experience. (JD)

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Pupil Control Ideology As A Source of Stress: The Student Teacher's Dilemma

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Pupil Control Ideology As A Source Of Stress: The Student Teacher's Dilemma

Dan R. Jones

Introduction

Student teachers are exposed to a barrage of influences on their professional growth and development. Each day they encounter new, and sometimes bewildering, situations with pupils, teachers, and the interactions within the classroom. Mastering the "routine" of teaching can be a major obstacle which may not be overcome without undergoing different kinds of stress during adaptation to the "real" teaching world.

One type of adaptation made by each student teacher is the development of an attitude towards controlling pupils. The student teacher's attitude toward pupil control may be at odds with those of other educators with whom the student teacher interacts. This discrepancy can be such that the free expression of attitude toward pupil control may not only be difficult, but may also be a source of stress. Stress results from the difference between the attitudes held by the student teacher and those of the "common practices" among the experienced teachers at the school.

Assessment of Attitude

Attitude toward pupil control can be assessed by means of an instrument called the "Pupil Control Ideology Form', or "PCI" (Willower, et.al., 1967). The PCI measurement can describe the attitudes of cooperating teachers and changes in student teachers' attitudes. This description is called the classroom management orientation of the teacher and is conceived along a "humanistic" to "custodial" continuum. The humanistic orientation has attitudes desiring a democratic school atmosphere with two-way communication flowing spontaneously between pupils and teachers with pupil self-discipline being substituted for strict teacher control. It is marked by a trustful view of pupils whose behaviors are interpreted in psychological and sociological terms. In marked contrast, the custodial orientation conceives of school as an autocratic organization where rigid control of student behavior is the central concern. Communication is unidirectional and flows from authority

to pupils, since students are mistrusted, irresponsible, undisciplined and must be controlled through punitive sanctions applied to behaviors interpreted in moralistic terms (Hoy, 1967).

Changes in Attitudes

A number of studies have found that the PCI of student teachers changes from pre- to post-student teaching measures. Findings for secondary student teachers have been consistent. A significant shift in PCI towards a more custodial orientation has been reported in student teaching experiences of 8 weeks (Hoy, 1967), 9 weeks (Hoy & Rees, 1977), and 16 weeks (Jones, 1982). In each group, the shift was in the same direction and of similar magnitude. However, findings for elementary student teachers have not been as consistent. Earlier studies (Hoy, 1967; Roberts & Blankenship, 1970) found significant shifts in PCI among 8 weeks elementary student teachers (all females) towards a more custodial orientation. The magnitude of change was smaller and the pre and post means were less custodial than those observed in secondary student teachers. The elementary shifts were in the same direction as the secondary. In a more recent study, Jones (1981) did not find a significant change in groups of 8 and 16 weeks elementary student teachers as previous researchers did. In an effort to substantiate this lack of a significant shift, Jones repeated the study with similar groups and again found no significant shift. This second study, reported here for the first time, raises the question whether today's elementary student teachers are experiencing a different effect of student teaching on their orientation than did their counterparts in earlier studies.

In a study comparing the PCI of student teachers with their cooperating teachers, Jones (1981) found that 8 and 16 weeks secondary student teachers began the experience with a significantly less custodial orientation as compared to that of their cooperating teachers. Upon completion of the experience after both groups had become significantly more custodial, there was no significant difference between their orientation and that of the cooperating teachers. For the elementary student teachers in 8 and 16 weeks experiences, there was no significant difference

between their orientation and that of the cooperating teachers either before or upon completion of the experience. This statistical equivalency of PCI existed even though the elementary student teachers had an increase (non-significant) in PCI to a level greater than that of their cooperating teachers.

The significant change towards a more custodial orientation has been observed to continue beyond that found during student teaching. After the significant shift towards a more custodial orientation observed in 8 weeks elementary and secondary student teachers, Hoy (1969) observed an additional significant shift in these teachers during their first year of inservice teaching. Again, this shift was towards an even greater custodial orientation. Yet, upon completion of their second year of teaching, no further significant shift occurred. This finding implied that the orientation of inservice teachers may remain stable after the initial impact of gaining teaching experience.

Reasons for the Shift

Hoy and Rees (1977) described the significant shift towards custodialism in secondary student teachers as resulting from a process of "Bureaucratic Socialization". This process involves an organization's attempt to mold the role ideology and performance of newcomers into consensus with the rest of the organization. By doing so, the beliefs, values, and norms of the individual come to correspond with those of the organization. They described public schools as bureaucratic structures which create a bureaucratic climate to which teachers are expected to adapt. Student teachers encounter a host of organizational forces which conflict with "ideal" attitudes fostered in their teacher training. They are expected to conform to the attitudes of the organization, i.e., the status quo of the school in which they student teach. In support of this view, Hoy and Rees found that secondary student teachers became significantly more bureaucratic in orientation as well as significantly more custodial in their classroom management orientation. They concluded that the forces of bureaucratic socialization seem strong and efficient at molding neophytes into roles conforming to adaptation and survival in

the school organization and its inherent bureaucratic atmosphere.

One of the forces within the secondary school organization which produces bureaucratic socialization appears to be the cooperating teacher. This is suggested by the finding that secondary student teachers become statistically equivalent in classroom management orientation to their cooperating teachers (Jones, 1981). Since the attitudes of the cooperating teachers are one of the most influential factors during the experience, their orientation appears to greatly affect the student teacher's attitudinal development of classroom management orientation. There are other factors which may influence this change even more than the cooperating teacher, such as classroom interactions, the pupils, the school climate, etc. But whichever factor(s) is most influential in a given situation, there is a molding of orientation of the secondary student teacher into line with that of the cooperating teacher.

Elementary student teachers did not have a consistent shift across the studies. Bureaucratic socialization does not clearly explain this. Two possible explanations for it are advanced here: (1)the influence of level of student teaching; and (2)the difference in teacher training programs at the time of the studies. The elementary level is inherently different than the secondary in terms of school organization and the manner in which this affects the classroom teacher. It may be less bureaucratic and afford the teacher greater autonomy in instruction. As a result, the "mold" of an acceptable teaching role may be less uniform than in the secondary environment. For example, the methodology of teaching first graders and sixth graders may have a much greater difference than the difference between teaching freshmen and seniors in high school. Hence, the elementary student teacher may have more choices of molds to adopt than secondary and bureaucratic socialization may have a less uniform influence on elementary than secondary student teaching experiences. This may be why the shift still occurred for secondary student teachers in recent studies.

However, if an explanation of less bureaucratic socialization

at the elementary level is correct for recent studies, then why did the shifts occur in early studies? The difference in "early experience" components of teacher training programs may be responsible. In the late 1960's, the extent of in-school experience prior to student teaching was minimal (if existing at all) in the form of a very short intensive observation during the Junior year (e.g., one week at the start of the Fall term). This experience was usually in isolation from university courses where theory was discussed. Student teachers in the more recent studies had a minimum of two semesters of early experience prior to student teaching as a component of their program. In light of Hoy's finding (1969) that the shift in orientation levels off after one year of inservice teaching, the expanded early experience component of teacher training may be moving the shift earlier in the preservice teacher's field experiences. The shift for elementary student teachers in recent studies may have already occurred during their first contacts with the classroom in the early field experiences. In the late 1960's, the first contact often was student teaching. Hence, a shift may still be occurring for elementary preservice teachers but it may take place prior to student teaching. At the present time, there is little data available to examine this proposed explanation.

Nature of Stress

What happens if the attitudes of the neophyte are different than those of the school organization? At a minimun, student teachers must adapt to the point of being "acceptable" in their actions by the cooperating teacher. This adaptation involves bringing their actions in line with the accepted role of a teacher in that school. Since actions usually reflect attitudes, a change in action may necessitate a change in attitude. If the changes in actions for becoming acceptable as a teacher require attitudes vastly different from those held by the beginning student teacher, then an "attitude discrepancy" develops between existing and required attitudes within the neophyte.

But the existence of an attitude discrepancy does not by

itself create stress for the student teacher. There must also be a factor of "personal conflict" which is the difficulty that an individual experiences in discarding their attitudes for those of the status quo when the latter does not feel right for them. For some neophytes, there may be little difficulty in giving up their attitudes for those of the status quo. They may even change unconsciously because they do not even know their own attitudes clearly. For them, the discrepancy is removed with little stress. But for others, discarding the attitudes developed in their earlier training and field experiences when confronted with the harsher "real world" attitudes of the school organization may be traumatic. To give up their attitudes is synonymous with "selling out". But if the neophyte in such a conflict does not conform, then the risk of not being acceptable (and thereby being evaluated unfavorably) is greatly increased. Student teachers become very aware of this risk and perceive it as extremely important to their success. Resolution of this conflict becomes a source of stress for that individual.

Dealing With Stress

If stress is partially a result of an attitude discrepancy in classroom management orientation, then there are situations where stress if more likely to occur. The research findings suggest that the secondary level is more likely than the elementary to have this discrepancy because the orientations of the student teacher and cooperating teacher are more likely to be equivalent both before and after the elementary experience.

Stress is also produced as a result of personal conflict, or a feeling of selling out, when a student teacher gives up his/her attitudes for those of the organization. Signs of this are not always easy to detect and require that the university supervisor get to know the student teacher as quickly as possible. They have to be able to recognize how a student teacher reacts in other stressful situations (e.g., when beginning new lessons, at conference times, when being observed) in order to know what the signs of stress are for that individual. Does the student teacher verbalize concerns or keep them inside? Does he/she react

differently in the presence of the cooperating teacher? Does he/she voluntarily discuss how their attitudes and approaches differ? How does he/she feel about changing to conform to the wishes of the cooperating teacher? These things may provide insight into whether or not there is a personal conflict within the student teacher (assuming there is an attitude discrepancy existing). However, there will be some student teachers whose personal conflict may not be detectable.

Two possible means for dealing with the potential for stress are advanced here. The university supervisor must either minimize the attitude discrepancy via placement or help the student teacher deal with the personal conflict if it develops after the placement is made.

To minimize the attitude discrepancy, the university supervisor needs to first consider the placement to determine if there is a potential for an attitude discrepancy. The influence of level of assignment should be considered first since it is more likely at the secondary than elementary level. Next, the orientation of the cooperating teacher and student teacher should be examined. A measure of the student teacher's orientation can be obtained prior to the placement. University supervisors should try to get to know the cooperating teachers and assess their orientation before making placements if at all possible. Ideally, a PCI measure should be obtained where it is feasible. Where it is not, an inference might be made about orientation and this could be more easily done in those assignments where the cooperating teachers are given student teachers repeatedly and a supervisor has a long-term relationship as a basis for inference. However, this should not be considered a recommendation for selection solely on the basis of this single measure.

Since the literature gives estimates of the range of PCI measures for public school teachers (Willower, et.al., 1967; Jones & Harty, 1978), the cooperating teacher's PCI could indicate situations which are at the extremes of the PCI range, i.e., strongly humanistic or strongly custodial. By comparing this with the PCI of the student teacher, an indication of a

potential for an attitude discrepancy would emerge. If none is evident, then there is less likelihood of a personal conflict developing in the student teacher. If there appears to be a discrepancy, then the supervisor should be more alert for signs of stress if the placement is made. For those potential placements with little difference between attitudes, other factors would take greater importance in the decision since the attitude discrepancy is less likely.

When a personal conflict develops, the university supervisor should try to help the student teacher deal with the stress. Procedures could include discussing the conflict to examine why there is a difference in attitudes; analysis of which orientation is more effective in that situation; consideration of a compromise rather than an all or nothing reaction; exploring alternative approaches to classroom management; providing the student teacher a chance to express inner feelings. However, a discussion with all student teachers of the potential for an attitude discrepancy is not recommended. This might produce more of a stressful or confusing situation than saying nothing because they might begin to look for something which does not even exist.

Conclusion

Stress over differences in attitudes towards classroom management orientation may occur during student teaching, especially at the secondary level. This will certainly not be the only, or even most serious, source of stress during the experience. But clues to its likelihood can be deduced from research findings and consideration of a potential for its occurrence can provide the university supervisor with additional insight into possible causes of problems among student teachers. If the analysis of this source of stress can assist the university supervisor in preventing or effectively dealing with it, then there may be a greater chance for fewer problems being encountered by student teachers. This could result in more student teachers achieving success with one less source of stress impeding the attainment of this goal of all teacher training programs.

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